Your Questions Answered

volume 5

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allah, the beneficent,the Merciful

PREFACE

This is the 5th Volume of this series and contains the important questions asked between 1986 and September 1990.

The questions came from Tanzania, Kenya, U.K. Germany and Poland, as well as from Canada, U.S.A., Guyana, Tobago and Trinidad; also there were questions from India, Pakistan, Dubai, Thailand and Singapore. Overwhelming majority of the correspondents was Shi'a; but there were also Sunnis and Hindus. I personally am very grateful to all of them for the trust and confidence shown in me. May Allah bless them all. Amen.

I pray to Allah to reward this humble effort with His acceptance, and to make this book useful for the seekers of guidance and truth.

Dar es Salaam — S.SAEED AKHTAR RIZVI

11th October, 1990 — Chief Missionary

Q1: ARE WE SELF-EXISTING OF CREATD?

Are we self-existing or created? Who created us?

A. We are not eternal; we have a beginning and an end. Also, we are not self existing, someone must have created us, must have brought us into existence. That creator is God, who is free from all defects and shortcomings. In Islam God is called Allah.

Q2.IS THERE ANY PURPOSE BEHIND OUR CREATION?

Was there any purpose behind our creation?

A. Doing a work without any reason or purpose is a defect; we do not like to be accused of working aimlessly. Obviously, Allah too must have created us for some good purpose. He points to this purpose when he asks mankind in the Qur'an: *"What! Do you think that we have created you in vain and that you shall not be returned to us?"* (Surah 23, aya 115) so there IS a purpose behind our creation.

Q. 3: WHAT IS PURPOSE OF OUR CREATION?

What is that purpose?

A. Let us ask the Creator Himself why He has created us. If He tells us, that would be the really authentic and genuine reason. And He, in His mercy, has already told us—without our asking. He says: *"And I have not created the jinn and the human beings except that they should worship Me."* (Surah 51, aya 56).

Q.4: OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

Then what is our responsibility?

A. Every man and woman must fulfil the purpose of his/her creation; everyone should submit to the Will of Allah and worship Him. When we worship Allah, we acknowledge His majesty and power and confess our helplessness and neediness, in a manner prescribed by Him. We should do it with sincere intention and pure heart, in obedience to Allah, in order that we may come nearer to Him.

Allah has sent Prophets, appointed Imams, revealed Books and prescribed Laws of Shari'an in order to guide us to the right Path, and to teach us the proper way of divine worship. We must follow their guidance, because it is the only way by which we may attain to the goal of our life, fulfil the purpose of our creation.

Q. 5: HOW TO FIND THE TRUE GUIDANCE?

How can we find their guidance?

A. By following the way of Islam.

Q. 6: WHAT IS ISLAM?

What is Islam?

A. Islam is to believe and accept that there is none to be worshipped but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger. It means that one MUST believe in and accept all that has been brought by Muhammad (s.a.w.a.).

Q. 7: MUSLIM SECTS.

How many groups are there in Islam?

A. There are two main groups: The Sunni and the Shi'a-we are Shi'a.

Q. 8: WHY ARE YOU CALLED SHI'A?

A. The word 'Shi'a' is from Arabic word At-Tashayo, which means 'to follow'. Thus the word, Shi'a, means "follower".

We are called Shi'a because after the Holy Prophet we follow Sayidana 'Ali and other sinless members of the family of the Holy Prophet.

Q. 9: "ITHNA- 'ASHARIYA": WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

A. Ithna-'ashar in Arabic means twelve. As we believe in 12 Imams (successors of the Holy Prophet of Islam), we are called Shi'a Ithna-'ashariya.

Q. 10: WHO CAN BECOME A SHIA ITHNA-'ASHARIYA?

Who can become a Shi'a Ithna'ashariya?

A. Any person, irrespective of his race, origin, colour or language, can become a Shi'a Ithna-'ashari, if he sincerely believes in our tenets and faithfully acts upon them.

Q. 11: MAIN FEATURES OF ISLAM

Will you explain to me the main features of Islam in short?

A. Islam consists of three parts.

1. Matters concerning belief which are called Roots of Religion.
2. Rules of Shari'ah which govern every aspect of our lives; they are called Branches of religion.
3. Islamic Ethics and Morality.

Q. 12: ROOTS OF RELIGION?

What are the roots of Religion?

A. There are five Roots of Religion: They are called:

1. Tawheed : Oneness of God
2. Adl : Justice of God
3. Nubuwwat: Prophethood
4. Imamat : Vicegerency of the Prophet
5. Qiyamat: Day of Judgement.

Q. 13: ONENESS OF GOD

What does Tawheed mean?

A. It means that there is only one God - Eternal, Self-sufficient; He has no beginning or end; He is Omnipotent, has power ever everything and every affair. He is Omniscient, knows everything, nothing is ever a secret from Him. He has His own discretion in all affairs, does not do anything under compulsion. He is All-perceiving, All-hearing, All-seeing and Omnipresent. He sees and hears everything though He has neither eye nor ear. He has no partner or colleague, nor has He any son, daughter or wife. He is neither made nor composed of any material substance. He has no body nor is He confined to a place. He is not afflicted by anything related to body; He is not governed by time, space, change or things like that. He is not visible. He has not been seen, and will never be seen either in this world or the hereafter. His attributes are not separate from His person.

Q. 14: MORE ABOUT ONENESS OF GOD

Will you throw some more light on the belief in oneness of God?

A. The belief in the Unity of God is the foundation stone of Islam. This belief governs the religious faith, designs the social patterns and gives life to the moral codes.

The first sentence of the Islamic Kalimah, i.e., "There is no god except Allah", leads a Muslim throughout his life not only in religious matters but in social behaviour also. "There is no god" shows a Muslim that nothing in the universe is superior to him. It is observed in the Qur'an that "He it is Who has created for you all that is in the earth." So a Muslim knows that nothing in this world is to be worshipped. Neither stone nor trees; neither animals nor human-beings; neither the Sun nor the Moon nor the Stars can be worshipped; because everything is created, and created for his benefit. When a Muslim, thus, has rejected every falsehood and every idea of nature-worship, idol-worship or human-worship, he is ready to believe in the positive truth of the Unity of God. Believing in a Supreme being gives an aim to our life and provides a purpose for our actions. Had a man been left with the wrong impression that there was no God at all, his life would have been aimless, and an aimless life is dangerous. So it is added that there is no god "except Allah". This sentence has a negative as well as a positive aspect. Both are instrumental in creating the belief that every man is equal to every other person. When nobody is superior, nobody is inferior. Thus, the belief in the Unity of God promotes the sense of brotherhood, equality and equity which is another feature of Islam.

Q15: RESPECT FOR THE NAME OF ALLAH

If I have written the Arabic name of God on a piece of paper, can I throw it away? Suppose this is in English, does the same rule apply? What about the names of the Ahlul-Bait?

A. It is haram to throw away the names of Allah or Ma'sumeen. Such writings should either be buried, put in river or ocean or re-cycled. It makes no difference whether it is written in Arabic or in any other script. (Be careful about the stamps of Iran. Some stamps have Qur'anic verses written on them).

Q. 16: SIGNIFICANCE OF 'ADI

What is the significance of 'Adi?

A. 'Adi means that Allah is just; He does not do injustice to any one. He has ordered us to do justice to our fellow creatures - but He Himself treats us not only with justice but with

grace. He created us for His worship, in order that we may attain spiritual perfection through it. That spiritual perfection enables us to reach nearer to Allah.

For this purpose, He has given us freedom of will and choice. When we choose, by our own free will, the Straight Path (prescribed by Allah) we are assured in the next world of everlasting happiness and glory by Grace of Allah.

Q. 17: MAN'S FREE WILL

In the above reply, you say that we, by our own free will, choose the path we proceed upon. But I have been told that the Muslims believe in predestination — that our all good and bad actions are predestined by Allah. Please explain the reality to me.

A. We know by our instinct that there are some matters over which we have no authority, concerning which we have no choice, like birth, death, happiness, unhappiness, affluence, poverty; etc. Such matters (which we may call our conditions) are totally in God's hands, although man has to fulfil his duties in that area too, at least in preliminary stages.

Also there are our "actions" which we instinctively know are done with our own will and choice, like speaking truth or lie, helping someone or refusing him help, etc.

Some Muslims think that man has no authority on this matter too. Others believe that man is totally independent in his actions and Allah has nothing to do with it.

But we, the Shi'a Ithna-'ashariyah, believe that man, in his actions, is neither compelled by Allah nor independent of Allah's control; the reality lies in between these two extremes.

To explain it fully, I would like to give you an example written by our present Mujtahid, Ayatullah as-Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khoui. Suppose there is a man whose hand is totally paralyzed; he by himself cannot move even a finger. A doctor has fitted a device on his hand which, when activated by a remote-control, restores the hand to normal condition and allowing the man the use of hand in whatever way he likes. The doctor has kept the remote-control in his custody. He has switched that control on, and it is the man who decides whether to use his newly-found power and strength for good cause or evil; the doctor does not Interfere, although if he wanted he coufd switch it off. Now, the good or bad actions done by that person are not done by the doctor's will and choice; but at the same time they are not totally independent of the doctor In the same way, we do whatever we do by our own free will and choice but the power to do so Is given us by Allah who may "switch it off" any time he pleases.

Q. 18: MEANING OF NUBUWWAT

What is the meaning of Nubuwwat And what is Nubuwwat?

A. To show us the Straight Path, Allah has been sending His representatives to the mankind. They are called nabii (Prophet) and rasul (Messenger). The rank of the Messengers was higher than the Prophets. Every Messenger was also a Prophet but not vice versa.

Q. 19: NUMBER OF PROPHETS:

How many Prophets came into the world?

A. There came in all 124,000 Prophets, 313 of which were Messengers. The Prophethood started with the first man, Adam, and ended with Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam.

All the Prophets and Messengers brought the same religion which nowadays is called Islam. It was but natural. As all of them were sent by the same God, naturally the message could not be more than one. The beliefs and morals taught by them were always the same, although the rules of shari'ah were changed from time to time according to the condition of the society.

Some messengers had a still higher position and are called Ulul-'azm.

Q. 20: HOW MANY ULUL''AZM

How many ulul- 'azm Messengers were there?

A. We know of five. They were Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), 'isa (Jesus) and Muhammad. Only the shari'ah brought by Muhammad (which is generally known as Islam) is valid now; it has abrogated all the previous shari'ah.

Q21: THE RELATION BETWEEN NABII (PROPHET) AND RASUL (MESSENGER)

"The dictum 'Every Messenger was a Prophet', deserves this comment:

The Prophet (Nabii) is a helping class, and the messenger (Rasul) is a class that is helped. "And when Allah made a covenan 'with the prophets: Certainly what I have given you of Books and Wisdom - then a messenger comes to you verifying that which is with you, you must believe in him and you must aid him." (Qur'an, 3:81).

Moreover, the messengers (Rasuls) need help even in the Akhirat: "Most surely we help our messengers and those who believe, in this world's life and on the day when the witnesses shall stand up." (40:51).

A. **First of all**, the verse 3:81 refers to the covenant taken from all the prophets about the Holy Prophet of Islam - that they would believe in him and help him by giving his good news to their nations and telling them to believe in him when he comes along. This Is generally agreed explanation found both in Sunni and Shi'a books and traditions.

Second: Even this verse shows that the prophets were required to "believe in" and help the messenger. Evidently it shows the higher status of the messengers.

Third: Prophets and messengers were not two mutually exclusive classes. According to general Islamic belief, based on prophetic traditions, there were 124,000 prophets- out of which 313 or 300 were messengers (among whom, 5 were ulul-'azm). Thus, every messenger was a prophet but not every prophet was a messenger.

Fourth: Your observation that prophets were a helper class and messengers the helped ones, is amusing. Do you mean to say that they were two mutually exclusive groups? Then what will you say about those messengers who have been called "messenger prophet"? Were they the helpers or the helped ones? Vide Qur'an, 7:157, 7:158, 19:51, 19:54, etc.

You say that the messengers (Rasuls) need help even in the Akhirat, and quote this verse: *"We will without doubt help our messengers and those who believe, in this world's life and on the day when the witnesses shall stand up."* (40:51).

I fail to understand what do you want to prove by this verse. How does it affect the relationship between Prophethood and messengership? And who does not need Allah's help in this life and in the next? The "believers" will be helped by Allah in Akhirat—does not this word cover the prophets too?

Q. 22: WHY THE QUR'AN DOES NOT CALL THE HOLY PROPHET AS AL-AMIN?

The article, 'The Prophet Muhammad through non-Muslim eyes', by Prof. Bomoklishna Poo, published in the Light contains the following sentence: "Muhammad has been admitted by friends and foes as Al-Amin (the trustworthy)."

The question is: "Why does not the Holy Qur'an call him by that title when: Nuh (Qur'an 26:107), Hud (Qur'an 26:125, 7:68), Salih (Qur'an 26:143), Lut (Qur'an 26:162), Shu'aib (Qur'an 26:178), Yusuf (Qur'an 12:54), Musa (Qur'an 28:26, 44:18) and even the Jinn 'Ifrit (Qur'an 27:39) have that epithet attached to their names in the Holy Qur'an?"

Could you please point out any ayat of the Holy Qur'an wherein the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is called Al-Amin? I do accept the Holy Prophet as Al-Amin as it is.

A. A very interesting question. You are right that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.) has not been mentioned with this title in the Qur'an. We do not know why. May be it is because his trustworthiness was an established fact which was undisputably recognised even by his enemies; and as such it needed no vouching by the Qur'an.

For example, the Qur'an does not mention about mother of any prophet, except Hazrat Maryam, that she was chaste. It was because only Hazrat Maryam needed this vouching.

Q. 23: SOME SPECIAL OBLIGATIONS AND PRIVILEGES OF THE HOLY PROPHET

I have read in "Your Questions Answered' that the Prophet had nine wives when he died. Aren't all Muslims supposed to have not more than four wives at a time?

A. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had some special duties and some special privileges. For example, it was wajib for him to pray tahajjud; to cleanse the teeth before every wuzu, etc. etc. Likewise, he was allowed to marry more than four wives (with many conditions).

Q. 24: THE BOOK REVEALED TO PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SA.WA.)

Was Prophet Muhammad given any book by God?

A. Yes. He was given the Qur'an by Allah. As he is the Final Prophet, his Book is the last Book revealed by Allah. It was revealed to Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) as the Guidance for mankind.

Q. 25: SHI'A BELIEF ABOUT QUR'AN

What is the belief of the Shi'a about the Qur'an?

A. We believe that the Qur'an is the word of Allah which was revealed to His last Prophet, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) as a miracle and guidance for the mankind. It is truth, around which falsehood cannot reach. It is the foundation of Islamic shari'ah. It is the Complete Book of God - nothing has been added to it, nothing has been removed from it, nothing has been changed in it. Even non-Muslim scholars admit that the Qur'an is free from all types of interpolation, change and defect—since the days of the Prophet to this day. In this respect, it differs from previous revealed books which have been extensively changed and altered.

Q. 26: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SURAH AL-KAUTHAR

I wish to enquire from you about the translation of the Qur'anic verse, Surah 108, verse 3. In the Holy Qur'an, by M.H. Shakir, the translation is: "Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity."

And in the Holy Qur'an, by Yusuf Ali, the translation is: "For he who hateth thee-he will be cut off (From future Hope).Of the two translations which is more correct. Because the word, "posterity", means descendant. In the New Webster's Dictionary this word means all future or succeeding generations

A. You have asked about the correct translation of the last verse of the chapter 108 (al-Kauthar), which has been translated by M.H. Shakir as follows:

"Surely your enemy Is the one who shall be without posterity." And which Abdullah Yusuf Ali translates in the following way: "For he who hateth thee - He will be cut off (From future hope)."

In fact Shakir's translation is correct. It is not possible to write the details in a letter. Still, it is necessary to explain that the word al-abtar is used in Arabic for one whose progeny is cut off, is discontinued.

When Qasim and 'Abdullah, the sons of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) died in their infancy, 'Asi ibn Wa'il taunted him that now he (the Prophet s.a.w.a.) had become al-abtar, i.e. he had lost his sons and now he was without a progeny. The Arabs did not give women-daughters, mothers, wives etc. - any importance. In their eyes, only the sons could perpetuate the name of the progenitor. The polytheists of Mecca (and especially 'Asi ibn Wa'il, who boasted that he hated the Prophet s.a.w.a, and was his bitter enemy) thought that because the Prophet had lost his sons, his mission would be finished after him.

In reply to this taunt, this shortest chapter was revealed. And it says that; "Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without posterity." The verse uses the same two words shani' (enemy) and abtar (without progeny) which 'Asi ibn Wa'il had used. And this prophecy was proved right, because soon all his progeny became extinct.

The Muslim rulers of the early centuries of Islam, for their own political reasons, wanted to erase the name of the family of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) from people's minds. For this purpose they hired scholars and writers who tried to give new interpretations to those Qur'anic verses which had any connection with the progeny of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). And by passage of time those mis-interpretations became a part of Islamic literature. This chapter too was interpreted and re-interpreted in many ways, one example of which you have seen in Yusuf Ali's translation.

The first verse of the chapter contains the word, al-Kauthar,which they have interpreted in not less than twenty-six ways. But no meaning gives this short chapter of three verses any coherent connotation. al-Kauthar in Arabic means "abundance." If you keep the meaning of the third verse in view, then clearly the first verse refers to the abundance of his descendants which the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was promised in this chapter. Now, read the whole chapter in this light:

"Surely we have given you abundance of progeny. Therefore, pray to your Lord and make a sacrifice. Surely your enemy is the one who shall be without progeny."

Also, al-Kauthar is the name of the heavenly reservoir in the Paradise which belongs to the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and from which 'Ali (a.s.) will give water to the Prophet's true followers.

Thus, we may say that the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was promised "abundance" in this world as well as in the next. In the hereafter it is the heavenly reservoir of abundant grace; and in this world, it is the increase in progeny.

This prophecy too has proved correct. There is hardly a place now where the descendants of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) are not found. They are called "Sayyid" or "Sharif"; and you will not find anyone claiming any relationship with 'Asi ibn Wa'il or other hateful enemies of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

The interpretation and the background is found not only in the Shi'a books but in Sunni writings too.

Q. 27: SYSTEM OF GUIDANCE AFTER THE PROPHET

Did the Prophet make any arrangement for guidance of people after his departure?

A. Yes. He has left two things for this purpose: the Qur'an and his sinless progeny. He has said: "I am leaving behind among you two precious things, one of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah which is the covenant of Allah from the heavens upto the earth, and my Descendants who are my family members. So look how you deal with them, and surely they both will not be separated from each other..."

Q. 28:WHO ARE THE FAMILY MEMBERS OF THE PROPHET?

Who are those Family Members who have been given the responsibility of guiding the mankind to the right path?

A.First of them is 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), whose name was declared at a huge gathering at Ghadir Khum, when the Prophet was returning from his last pilgrimage. There the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) delivered a long Khutba (lecture) at the end of which he asked the Muslims: 'Do not I have more authority upon you than you have got upon yourselves?". All of them responded by saying. "Surely, O Messenger of Allah!" Then the Prophet took the arms of 'Ali, and showing him to the audience, declared: "He whose Master am I, this 'Ali is his Master."

Q. 29: WHAT DOES IMAMAT MEAN?

And the fourth Root, Imamat?

A. To lead the people to the Straight Path, and to preserve the religion of Islam, Allah appointed twelve successors—one after another—of the Prophet of Islam. They were from the progeny of the Prophet. Those successors are called Imams. Imam literally means leader. As mentioned above, first of them was 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, and the last one is al-Mahdi (a.s.).

Q. 30:NUMBER OF IMAMS

Was any number fixed for this chain of the Guides?

A. Yes, according to many accepted traditions, the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said: "Imams after me will be twelve."

Q. 31: THE TWELVE IMAMS

Who are those twelve Imams?

A. They are as follows:

1. 'Ali
2. Hasan
3. Husayn
4. 'Ali Zaynul 'Abdeen
5. Muhammad Baqir
6. Ja'far Sadiq
7. Musa Kazim
8. ‘Ali Rida
9. Muhammad Taqi
10. Ali Naqi
11. Hassan ‘Askari
12. Muhammad Mahdi

Q. 32:WHY SUNNI SCHOLARS, IN SPITE OF NARRATING HADITH OF GHADEER,DO NOT ACCEPT 'ALI (A.S.) AS FIRST KHALIFA?

If there are so many Sunni scholars who have narrated the traditions that 'Ali was the appointed successor of the Prophet and that after him 12 Imams were to follow, how come the Sunni majority still believes in the three Caliphs etc. How can those scholars be called Sunni, if they narrate these traditions which prove Shi'a belief?

A. It is because in their eyes Imamate is synonymous with ruier-ship; and, as such, depends on acceptance of people. Allah or Rasul, in Sunni theology, have no role in it. A famous Sunni writer had once written in India, "I accept that it was the Prophet's ardent wish that 'Ali should be his immediate successor. But also it should be accepted that the Ummah decided otherwise". So this is their way of thinking. For details, see my book, Imamat, available from the Mission.

Q. 33: DID 'ALI (A.S.) ACCEPT ABU BAKR AS THE RIGHTFUL KHALIFAH?

In The "Light" (June, 1986) in the article The Origin of the Shiahs' appears this passage: "Both the Sunni and the Shia sects agree that when allegiance was being taken from Muslims, 'Ali (a.s.) did not accept the authority of Abu Bakr."The question arises, whether 'Ali (a.s.) ever accepted the - Khilafat of Abu Bakr?

A. The sentence ("Both the Sunni and the Shi'a sects agree that when allegiance was being taken from Muslims, 'Ali (a.s.) did not accept the authority of of Abu Bakr") is correct The difference is about the later period, whether after the death of Hazrat Fatima (a.s.), 'Ali (a.s.) gave the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr. The Sunnis claim, as mentioned in Bukhari, that he did. The Shi'as deny it.

I do not have time to go into detailed explanations. Suffice it to say that Bibi Fatima and Hazrat 'Ali (peace be on them) both were sinless and Ma'sum; and the verse of "Purity" confirms their freedom from every error and sin. As the Sunnis accept that Bibi Fatima did

not allow her husband to give allegiance to Abu Bakr, it naturally means that she herself did not accept Abu Bakr. Not only that; they agree that she died angry with Abu Bakr and Umar; and told 'Ali (a.s.) not to allow them to attend her funeral.

Now, the question arises Was her rejection of Abu Bakr right or wrong? It could not be wrong, because Fatima (a.s.) couid not do any wrong. So, it was right; and that is why 'Ali (a.s.) too could not give allegiance to Abu Bakr.

Now, if 'Ali (a.s.) changed his stand after six months as the Sunnis claim, then the question arises: Which of his stands was correct? If, as explained above, his attitude during first six months was correct, then changing it would be wrong, an error and a sin. But 'Ali (a.s.) was free from all errors and sins.

Two other events show what attitude 'Ali had towards these persons.

First: During the Shura, when 'Abdur Rahman ibn 'Awf offered Khilafat to 'Ali (a.s.) on the condition that 'Ali (a.s.) would follow (1) the Book of Allah, (2) the tradition of the Prophet and (3) the system of the two shaykhs (i.e., Abu Bakr and 'Umar), 'Ali (a.s.) refused to accept the 3rd condition (i.e., following the system of Abu Bakr and 'Umar). The same condition was put before 'Uthman, who at once agreed and was declared as the 3rd Khalifah. Had 'Ali (a.s.) agreed to that condition, it would have been tantamount to confirming their legitimacy. For 'Ali (a.s.) leaving his own chance of Khilafat was easier than showing that they were legal Khalifas.

Second: When Ibn Ziyad (Yazid's governor of Kufa) appointed 'Umar ibn Sa'd as commander of the army which was being sent to Karbala, he said to 'Umar ibn Sa'd to fight and kill Imam Husayn (a.s.) unless the Imam gives his allegiance to Yazid. To this, 'Umar ibn Sa'd replied: “Husayn will not give that allegiance because the heart (nafs) of his father is inside his chest.” What does it mean? It means that at least upto the year 61 A.H., friends and foes alike knew that Ali (a.s.) had not given allegiance to those Khalfas. Otherwise, Ibn Ziyad would not have remained silent.

Q.34: THE PRESENT IMAM

Who is the Imam these days?

A. The Imam these days is the 12th Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi (a.s.).

Q. 35: SOME MORE ABOUT THE PRESENT IMAM.

Tell me some more about him.

A. Imam Mahdi (a.s.), the twelfth Imam, is alive, but is hidden from our eyes by order of Allah. He will re-appear, when Allah allows him, to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. It will be near the end ot the world, when he will establish justice and equity in the world after it would have been devastated by injustice and oppression.

Q. 36: HE WHO DIES WITHOUT KNOWING THE IMAM OF HIS TIME...

Can you give me the full references to the quote on page 17 of the The Light (August, 1987): "He who dies without recognising the Imam of his age is like the one who died during the Jahiliyah."

A. It is a well known hadith, accepted both by the Sunnis and the Shi'as. For Shi'a books, please see 'Allama Majlisi's "Biharui-Anwar", 7th volume (Vol. 23 in the new printing in which original 25 volumes have been printed in 110 handy volumes), chapter 4: "Chapter

of recognising the Imam, and that people shall not be excused if they discard the Wilayah; and that he who dies without recognising his Imam, or having doubt about him. dies the death of Jahiliyyah, disbelief and hyprocrisy". There you will find more than 30 traditions to this effect narrated from the Prophet (s a.w.a.) and the Imams, in various words (New edition, vol. 23. p 76-95).

As for the Sunnis references,at present I can give you the reference of Kanzul-Ummai,(by Mulla ‘Ali al-Muttaqi, 5th ed.1985, Beirut), 1st Vol. p. 103, Hadith 'No.463 and 464.

Hadith No.463:(Abdullah) ibn ‘Umar narrates:’He who dies without (doing) bai’at dies the death of Jahiliyyah:” It is quoted from al-Musnad of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

No. 464: Mu'awiyah narrates: "He who dies without an Imam, dies the death of Jahiliyyah". It is quoted from al-Musnad of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and al-Mu'jam al-kabir of Imam at-Tabarani.

Q. 37: WHO WILL KILL DAJJAL?

In the book, "Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the last Prophet", it is mentioned that Hazrat 'Isa (a.s.) is the person who will chase and kill Dajjal. But in many of the books written by Shi'ite scholars, it is stated that this work will be done by Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.). Kindly clarify this contradiction.

A. As the said book deals with the Qadianis' beliefs, naturally most of the traditions and references have been given from the Sunni books; and their books refer to Hazrat 'Isa (a.s.) as the one who will kill Dajjal.

However, it is not irreconcilable with most of the Shi'a traditions which say that the 12th Imam (a.s.) will kill Dajjal. As Hazrat 'Isa (a.s.) will come to assist Imam Akheruz-Zaman (a.s.) and will fight the unbelievers under his banner as one of his closest commanders, any work done by Hazrat 'Isa (a.s.) can logically and truthfully be attributed to Imam Akheruz-Zaman (a.s.). So, even if someone insists on the Sunni version, he cannot discard the Shi'a traditions.

Q.38: RAJ'AT (RETURN)

Will the total transformation of the society into an Islamic one be achieved during the reign of Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) or will it be completed by the other holy Imams' (a.s.) "Return" (i.e. Raj'at)? By the way, will the other Imams (a.s.) come during the life-time of Imam-e-Zaman (a.s.) or after his death?

A. "The total transformation" will happen during the reign of Imam Sahebuz-Zaman (a.s.). The belief in "Raj'at" is necessary, and the concept and the principle must be believed in. But the details should be left into the hands of Allah.

However, it is certain that the Prophet and all preceding eleven Imams (peace be on them) will return during the life-time of Imam Sahebu-e-Zaman (a.s.).

Q. 39: DAY OF JUDGEMENT

What is the significance of the Day Judgement?

A. After re-appearance of Imam al-Mahdi, there will come Qiyamat, the day of resurrection, the day of judgement. All people will die; then the whole mankind will be resurrected to face the reckoning of their faith and deed. People having correct belief and doing good deeds will be placed in the paradise; while people having wrong belief will go to the hell.

Q.40: WHO WERE FOLLOWERS OF NABII DAWOOD?

Who were the followers of Nabii Dawood? Where did they live? Are there any left and what were the beliefs taught to them by the Prophet?

A. Prophet Dawood (a.s.) was not a messenger; he followed the shari'ah of Hazrat Musa (A.s.). He was given a book, Zabur, which consisted of Du'as and Munajat. It is included in the Old Testament, and its name in English is the Psalms.

Q. 41: IMPORTANCE OF GOOD MORALITY

What is the importance of good morality in the eyes of Islam?

A. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has explained the most important objective of his mission in these words:-

"Indeed I have been sent only to perfect good manners."

Q. 42: SOME CHARACTERISTICS CONSIDERED GOOD IN ISLAMIC ETHICS

Can you enumerate some things which are good and important in Islamic ethics?

A. To do good deeds with sincerity and honesty; Dependence upon God; to do justice to one another; to do good to both parents; to look after one's blood-relations; to help each other in good deeds; to reconcile people; truth.

Cultivating good habits, acquiring knowledge; bravery; humility; mercy and gentleness; to deal well with people; generosity; leading a moral life; helping the weak.

To salute aloud; patience; to entertain; forgiveness; fulfilling peoples needs; equity; fearing God; cleanliness; respecting others;thanking God.

Q. 43: SOME OF THE FORBIDDEN THINGS

And some forbidden and bad things?

A. Rebelling against and disobeying parents; fornication/adultery; sodomy; lesbianism; drinking liquor; gambling; eating flesh of swine and other forbidden things; usurping other people's property; bribery, foresaking religious duties; stealing; pimping and helping adultery; lying; backbiting and creating discord; usury; murder; embezzlement; oppression.

Masturbation; breach of promise; cheating; adulteration in merchandise; spying in other peoples' affairs; abusing and recrimination; indecent dressing by women; helping the oppressor; judgement against the tenet of Islam.

Niggardliness; envy; cowardice; lack of courage; treachery and enmity; vengeance; complaining when in distress.

Boasting, greed; laziness, vain talk and self-humiliation.

Q.44. WHAT ARE THE BRANCHES OF RELIGION?

And what are the branches of religion?

A. There are many branches, i.e. the rules of Shari'ah. But generally ten are considered most important.

They are:

1. Salat-Prayer
2. Saum- Fasting
3. Hajj - Pilgrimage to Mecca
4. Zakat-Welfare tax
5. Khums-Paying one-fifth of saving
6. Jihad—Fighting in the cause of religion.
7. Amr bil Ma'ruf-To exhort others to do good
8. Nahy 'anil munkar-To forbid others to do evil
9. To love the Prophet and his family members and to remain aloof from their enemies.

Q. 45: ON WHICH THINGS SAJDAH IS ALLOWED?

In the book, Digest Peshawar Nights, published by Mis Peer mohamed Etrahim Trust, Karachi, in Chapter III: (Why Do Shias Perform Sajda (Prostration) On dust), it is said: "... according to Quranic injunction prostration must be performed on pure earth which includes dust, stone, sand and grass and all things that grow from earth, provided they are not used in eating or wearing." In which Surah I can find the ayat speaking about that subject? That is the question put by some Sunni students studying here and I could not show them the Qur'anic injunction.

A. I could not find here (in London) the original Persian copy of "Shabha-e-Peshawar" (Peshawar Nights); but I am almost certain that the mistake has been done by the English translator, not the original writer. The law, that sajdah should be done on earth or a thing which grows from earth and is not used in eating or wearing, is based on ahadith, not on Qur'an. There are scores of ahadith even in Sunni books to this effect. Some of those books are:

- Sahih at-Tirmidhi
- Sunan Abu Dawood
- Sunan an-Nasa'i
- Mustadrak-u-Sahihayn of al-Hakim
- Kanzul-'Ummal
- al-Musnad of Ahmad ibn Hanbal

If you need detailed references, please write to me

Q. 46.ABOUT 'QASR' PRAYER

Here in Zanzibar, when our brothers go to a distance of 8 farsakh (= 27 miles 48 yards) or more, they offer Qasr prayer, and break their fast. Now, the town is Zanzibar, the island is Zanzibar. Even at that distance they are not out of Zanzibar.How can they break their fast or pray Qasr?

A. Your brothers' action is absolutely correct. Your confusion arises because of the sameness of the names. Now if you call the island with its Swahili name, “Unguja”, and speak of the town as “Zanzibar”, there will be no problem at all.

Q.47. DEMOLISHING OLD MASJID TO BUILD A NEW ONE

Is erection of a new mosque in place of the old one allowed in sheri'ah if the old structure is still sound?

If the old mosque building in whatever circumstances has been demolished, how should the old corrugated sheets, doors, windows, stones and debris be disposed off?

Can a Non-Muslim be employed to demolish a mosque?

A. Masjid may be demolished if it has become weak or dangerous or if it is necessary to enlarge the Masjid. Non-Muslim labour should not be used for demolishing the Masjid, nor should any non-Muslim be allowed to enter the area of old Masjid, because the site remains Masjid even when there is no structure on it.

The building material (including stones and debris) of the old Masjid should be used in other Masjids (even of Sunnis). If this too is not possible, then it should be sold for use in other religious buildings of Shi'as or Sunnis or to a Muslim who would know its sanctity. The price thus realised should be used in new Masjid's construction.

Q. 48: PRAYER BEHIND A SUNNI IMAM

On salat, should we pray behind sunni? If so, what about the saying that those who pray with their hands folded their prayer is not accepted?

A. There are a few situations when a Shi'a may pray behind a Sunni Imam. The most obvious case is of taqiyyah when one has to hide his belief because of danger to his life, property or honour. Another is the occasion when the Islamic unity has to be demonstrated. And according to the ruling of Ayatullah al-'Uzma as-Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khoui, in all such cases one must recite Surah al-Fatiha and the other surah (which he is required Not to recite behind a Shi'a Imam).

Q49. I AM NOT WELCOME AT SUNNI MOSQUES

From your previous correspondence, it is clear that a Shi'ite is not prevented from joining Sunni Jamaat prayers. I also realize the emphasis for Muslims to join Jamaat prayers. Although living near a mosque, I hesitate in joining congregational prayers for the following reasons:-

a) *When the Sunnis see me praying without folding hands, they look upon me as one gone astray; with the majority turning their eyes on me, making me uneasy. The same applies when I do masah on feet in ablution instead of washing legs as they do.*
b) *In most daily prayers, the Imam prays too quickly for a Shi'ite to follow him, or to keep pace with him (Imam). For example,the Imam rushes Surahs to such an extent that he goes to Ruku before the Shi'ite has even started the surah after surah Fateha. In general, in local Sunni congregational prayers, there is a tendency of rushing prayers as compared with strict Shi'ite rules for prayers.*

A. In the above circumstances, you may discontinue going to that mosque at the time of their Jamaat prayers. Please go therein after the people have gone away. If that too creates difficulties, then stop praying in that mosque altogether; pray in your home.

Q. 50: IF A WIFE DOESN'T PRAY

My wife doesn't want to perform daily prayers although she is a daughter of the Imam of a nearby mosque. My impression is that she was not in the habit of performing prayers even before. In order to instill the fear of Allah in her, I translated the whole book of Day of Judgement for her but she wasn 't moved! I realized that whoever is not moved by that book of yours, must be having a harder heart than rocks. I have therefore decided to leave it like that. But I must be sure of my responsibility on this matter; hence the following questions.

a) Am I going to be answerable to Allah for her negligence of five prayers?

b) Am I required to take any steps against her by the Shari'ah?

A.

a) No, if you have tried your best but failed.

b) Put as much moral pressure on her as you can. But if she persists in her behaviour, you are not to be blamed. However, make sure that the children are brought up as practising Muslims.

Q. 51: FUNERAL PRAYER FOR A NON-PRACTISING SHI'A

If there is an Ithna- 'asheri who does not pray and also drinks alcohol, and I know about him. Now when he dies a prayer is held, how can I declare before God that I know nothing bad about him when I actually do know? Is it not that I will be telling lies before God?

A. The declaration, “We do not know about him except good”, mainly refers to the Iman and faith of the deceased.

Even if it were purely related to his deeds, there should be no cause to worry. We know that Allah's mercy has no limits; Allah is in fact pleased to find an excuse for showering His mercy on a deceased believer. My father (May Allah raise his rank in the Paradise!) had narrated to me the following event: Once a most pious teacher of him was leading the funeral prayer of a person whose evil deeds were known to him. Reaching to the above mentioned sentence, he hesitated for a moment, but eventually uttered the words. At night he saw in dream that someone was telling him: “Why were you reluctant in saying that you did not know anything about him except good? Do you think that Allah does not know man's true condition? The Creator surely knows even His creatures' hidden secrets. But Allah is pleased when someone offers Him a reason to bestow His mercy on a believer. If forty believers say during the funeral prayer of a believer that they did not know about him any thing but good, Allah says to His angels: 'So many of My creatures knew the deceased person's wrong-doings, and yet they have covered it up. Therefore, I too should cover his sins up with My mercy and forgive his wrong-doings.'”

Q. 52: IF A MUSLIM DIES IN UNBELIEVERS' COUNTRY

1. *In his Ruling 317 of Minhajus-Saleheen, our present Marja' says: “It is not lawful to bury Muslim in the graveyard of unbelievers or to bury an unbeliever in the graveyard of Muslims”. What is the judgement of our Marja' regarding a Muslim living in a non-Muslim country where there are no Muslim grave-yards? Where should he be buried?*
2. *What is the judgement of our Marja' regarding a Muslim deceased in a non-Muslim country where there is nobody to carry out the obligatory bathing and then to offer the prayer ofJanaza? Will the soul of the deceased have to suffer on account of*

that?

A. I had written you once that the shari'ah recognises the difference between *Darul Islam* and *Darul kufr*, because not all the rules can be enforced in a place dominated by unbelievers. Therefore, a Muslim who dies in such a country will be buried in the place reserved by the town authorities for burial.

As for the second question, please remember that *“No bearer of burden shall bear the burden of another.”* (Qur'an, ch. 53, v. 38; ch. 35.V.18).

So in both cases, there will be no trouble for the dead Muslim at all. A man gets reward or punishment for what he has done; not for what others have done or not done to his dead body.

Q.53: DOLLS KEPT IN A ROOM

Can we keep statues or dolls in our homes, if we do not pray in that room?

A. According to Ayatullah al-Khoui, it is allowed.

Q.54: ZAKAT MONEY

Regarding Zakat money should I pay it to Shi'a brothers only or to any poor in the town?

A. It is only for the Shi'a Ithna-'asheri poor.

Q. 55: ABOUT SAHM-E-IMAM

Am I allowed by shari'ah to pay my Khumus Sahm-e-Imam (a.s.) to those Zakirs who come to Zanzibar for reciting majlis of Imam Husain (a. s.) whether they be Sadat or not? Or should I pay to those Zakirs only who are Sadat?

A. Khums Sahm-e-Imam must be handed over to the Mujtahid or his authorised agent. It is used by the Mujtahid for religious, education and missionary work.

If you have any specific project of this type, for which you want to use the Sahm-e-Imam (a.s.), you will have to write to Ayatullah al-'uzma al-Khoui (with full details) for his permission, it means you cannot give it to any one without the said permission.

Q.56: PHILOSOPHY OF JIHAD

You have counted jihad as a branch of religion. How can you justify war as a desirable thing?

A.I am glad that you asked this question. Let us look at this matter in a dispassionate way. Islam does not like to exterminate wrong-doers, it wants to remove the wrong. Evil deeds are like diseases. They need treatment and every doctor wants to cure the ailments with medicines as far as possible. But sometimes the ailment reaches a stage where no medicine can do any good; he feels that surgical operation is necessary if the life of the patient is to be saved. Then he decides, not happily but reluctantly, to ampute one or more limbs of the patient. It may cause hardest pain for the time being; but it is not torture, it is mercy.

Likewise, suppose that this humanity is a compact body; some of its parts become infected with spiritual disease and every medicine of sympathetic persuasion and rational pleading has failed. And there is a danger that their infection is causing harm to, and inflicting

hardships upon, other parts; and the spiritual doctor, I mean the Prophet or Imam who is guided by Allah,is confident that now the surgical operation is essential to save other parts of mankind from trouble. Then, and only then, he will order a Holy-War; and then also it will be limited to that part which is most necessary to remove.

But even if you feel that there is necessity of a surgical operation you will never entrust this most dangerous task to an unauthorized person. It will be a very foolish and irresponsible action. You can never be satisfied that the operation is essential unless a qualified doctor tells you so. Therefore, according to Shi'a-Ithna'ashari law, a war cannot be started unless specifically authorized by the Prophet or Imam himself, and that also to the limits prescribed by that Representative of Allah. After all, life is a creation of God and it should not be destroyed unless it has been authorized to do so by a Representative of God. Accordingly, the Holy-War is forbidden for the Shi'a Ithna-'asheris during the period when our Imam is hidden from us. The Prophet himself never started any war unless it was thrust upon him by the enemies. A study of the map of Arabia will show the actual facts. When the Prophet took refuge in Medina, the Meccans became infuriated because they could not satisfy their anger against him. So they made repeated attacks on him. The battle places of three important wars will tell the story. The first war 'Badr' was fought at Badr in the second year of Hijra. Badr is 80 miles frorh Medina and 170 miles from Mecca. Is there any doubt that the Meccans were the aggressors? The second war named 'Uhud' was fought next year at Uhud. Uhud is 3 miles from Medina and 247 miles from Mecca. Two years after Uhud, Medina was surrounded by Meccans and Jews for about one month. They had come 250 miles from Mecca to attack Medina. Is there anybody who can say that the Prophet should not have fought in self-defence? The first Ayat of 'Qur'an permitting the war, after 14 years of continual oppressions, speaks for itself. Qur'an says: “*Permission to fight is given to those upon whom war has been thrust, because they are oppressed.”*

Q57: WAS ISLAM SPREAD BY SWORD?

But we were told that Islam was spread by sword. Is it not correct?

A. Absolutely wrong. It is a propaganda started by enemies of Islam which has no basis at all. You have just seen that the Muslims had to fight in self-defence, the Holy Prophet of Islam did not start any war; and no war was fought “to spread Islam”, it was done to defend the Muslims. And all the wars were fought with minimum required force and always keeping the love of humanity in heart. A good proof may be found in the fact that in all the wars fought during the life of the Holy Prophet, the total loss of life (on both sides) was less than seven hundred

Q. 58: PURPOSE OF IMAM HUSAYN'S MARTYRDOM

A Sunni scholar delivered a very eloquent lecture in Husein Day at our town. He said: "Hazrat Amir Mo'awiyah (May Allah be pleased with him!) destroyed the Islamic system of government, by changing it from democratic Khilafat to hereditary monarchy; and that was why Imam Husayn (a.s.) had to stand up against Yazid. Islam does not recognise monarchy. The Imam willingly endured unprecedented sufferings and sacrificed his all in order to protect the Islamic democratic system of leadership against hereditary monarchy."

Any Comment?

A. Yes. A book may be written about these premises; but obviously a letter has its limitations. Yet a few points should be clarified here:-

FIRST: Is monarchy or hereditary monarchy really not acceptable to Islam? What will they say about Talut whom Allah had appointed as the "King" of Israel? (Qur'an, ch. 2, verses 246-248). The Kingdom was his to bestow on whomever he pleased. When Dawud killed Jalut (Goliath) in the battle, Talut appointed Dawud as his heir-designate. When Dawud died, Sulayman "inherited" the kingdom. (Qur'an, ch. 27, verse 16).

So here you find hereditary monarchy with all its ramifications.

Second: No system of government is inherently good or bad. It is as good or bad as the person holding the power in his hands. The Prophet (s.a.w.a.) had all powers concentrated in his hands; in modern terminology he could be called a "dictator". But it was a "dictatorship" for which thousands of democracies could be sacrificed. It follows that no form of government provides a panacea for mankind's troubles unless it is headed by a sinless (Ma'sum) ruler.

Third: What democracy they are talking about? Abu Bakr was chosen by a handful of people. No body had known that there was going to be any "election"; nor was the place, date, time, or method of election announced. Even the prospective candidates were neither aware of, nor present at, the so-called "election". 'Umar was appointed by Abu Bakr, and people were ordered to do bai'at for the person whose name was inside a sealed cover. 'Uthman was chosen, supposedly by a committee of six, but in practice by one person. If all this was democratic, then what does the word, "undemocratic", mean?

Fourth: Coming to our own side, we know that Imam Hassan (a.s.) was appointed by Allah as the second Imam to succeed his father, 'Ali (a.s.), the first Imam. But for those who believe in 'Ali (a.s.) as the fourth Caliph, there is a real problem here. If hereditary succession to caliphate was wrong, then why do they count Imam Hassan (a.s.) as the fifth "Rightly guided caliph"?

Now let me explain, in simple words, why in recent times many Sunni thinkers have started offering this justification for the stand of Imam Husayn (a.s.):-

In Karbala, there were two forces facing each other: Imam Husayn (a.s.) and Yazid. For the Shi'as, there was no problem. They believed that the Imamate belonged to Husayn by divine appointment and any one fighting him was wrong. But the majority of the Sunnis faced a dilemma. Yazid was appointed by the preceding Caliph, Mo'awiyah, just as 'Umar was by Abu Bakr. He was firmly holding the rein of political and military power in his hand; that was the same method by which Mo'awiyah is said to acquire the legal caliphate. Thus Yazid was a doubly-qualified Caliph, while all the previous caliphs had only one qualification each. Logic demanded that Yazid should be accepted a legally-appointed caliph, and any body standing against him should be called a "rebel". In fact a great Sunni scholar, Qazi Abu Bakr Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi (died in 543 A.H.)[A] frankly had said: "Husayn was not killed but with the sword of his grandfather (the Prophet) because Yazid's bai'at had already taken place and Husayn had rebelled against him."

But for the majority of the Sunnis, this was not a palatable idea. They knew that, according to the Qur'an and prophetic traditions, Imam Husayn was son of the Prophet and his flower; he was purified by Allah and could not commit sin; his love and obedience was obligatory for Muslims; and he, together with his elder brother, was the chief of the youths of paradise. How could such a sinless chief of the paradise's youths be called a rebel?

This tug-of-war between the teachings of Qur'an and hadith on one side, and the logic of their religious creed on the other, was fortunately resolved by the change of wind in the modern world when people started singing praise of democracy. Then intelligent thinkers, like Maulana Abul A'la Maududi, began saying that Amir Mo'awiya had tried to pervert and destroy the Islamic democracy, and that it was to protect that democracy that Imam

A Not the well-known Sufi of the same name who came later and died in 638 A.H.

Husayn (a.s.) had accepted martyrdom..

This propaganda has been going on for a very long time, and with such zeal and fervour that even some Shi'a scholars have been hypnotized by it. It is really distressing to hear those Shi'a scholars parrot-like repeating this falacy without understanding its implications.

Q. 59: DEMONSTRATION AT MECCA

The obligatory pillars of Hajj are to be preserved. Allah says: 'Show us our place for the celebration of rites'. (Qur'an 2:128).To take out processions during Hajj season to condemn America / Israel / Monarchies etc., is not an essential part of a Hajj.

A. Well, the Qur'an says, concerning the days of Hajj: *“There is no blame on you in seeking bounty from your Lord.”* (Qur'an, ch. 2, verse 198). The bounty is accepted by all to mean trade and business. Also, He says about the Hajj-. “*That they may witness advantages for them...”* (22:28).

Now if business and personal advantageous deals are not against the sanctity of Hajj, how can we claim that matters affecting the welfare of the World Muslim Ummah cannot be discussed in the Hajj? Or that, identifying the enemies of Ummah is against the ummah's interest?

Of course, it is debatable whether it was “essential” or not But none can say that it is “disallowed” in Hajj.

Q. 60: MORE ON DEMONSTRATION AT MECCA

Mecca Shariff should be protected from such non-Hajj activities because co-ordination therein is impossible vis-a-vis law and order situation: Read the following tradition:

Narrated Ibn Abbas...'Abdur Rahman bin Auf...was with 'Umar bin Al-Khattab during 'Umar's last Hajj... 'Abdur-Rahman said... 'O the Chief of Believers!... the season of Hajj gathers the riffraff and the rubble and it will be they who will gather around you when you stand to address the people. And I am afraid that you will get up and say something, and some people will spread your statement and may not say what you have actually said, and may not understand its meaning, and may interpret it incorrectly. So you should wait till you reach Madina, as it is the place of emigration and the place of Prophet's traditions, and there you can come in touch with the learned and noble people and tell them your ideas with confidence and the learned people will understand your statement and put it in proper place". On that 'Umar said "By Allah! Allah willing, I will do this in the first speech I will deliver before the people in Medina" (Bukhari No. 817IG, 537Ich. 82/Vol. 8). ‘

A. The tradition concerns 'Umar ibn al-Khattab and' Abdur Rahman ibn 'Awf both of whom were non-Ma'sum and their views are not binding oh us. Moreover, your quotation does not say or imply that giving lecture in Hajj was not permissible. It only shows that 'Umar was advised not to speak on a certain subject in that gathering, and yet it is clear that if touching on such subjects during Hajj were “forbidden”, 'Umar would not have thought of speaking on them in Hajj, in the first place. That he accepted Ibn 'Awfs advice, is besides the point It shows speaker's own discretion, not religious prohibition. Apart from that, beginning from the time of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) uptill now Khutbas have been delivered in 'Arafat and/or Mina, during Hajj days, dealing with the matters concerning the Muslim Ummah. 'Umar himself used to deliver lectures in 'Arafat during Hajj. (Vide Kanzul Vmmal,vo\. 5, p. 284, hadith No. 12902). So, why object if some people wanted to express their views on common matters of Ummah before Hajj?

Of course, as I have said above, you may argue that it was not “essential”; but none can

say that-it was against the sanctity of Hajj.

Q.61: SHOULD WE PROPAGATE OUR SECTARIAN BELIEFS WHEN IRAN ADVOCATES ISLAMIC UNITY?

Must we promote our school of thought to the Sunnis or should we abstain for the sake of unity? If so, should the unity be a tight and close one, or only superficial?

A. There appears to be a common misunderstanding about the Iranian slogan of "Islamic Unity" in both Shi'a and Sunni circles. There are three conceivable ways of unity among the Muslims. Two of them are:

1. Unity in belief, that all Muslims should adopt a single set of beliefs, or
2. Unity in Masa'il (rulings) of Shari'ah, that all Muslims should follow a single set of rites of worship, as well as personal, social, financial and penal codes

Obviously both these methods are impossible to adopt. Now only remains the third way of unity, and that is the unity in face of the enemies of Islam.It means that all Muslims should stand shoulder to shoulder to defend Islamic values, Muslim land and the Muslim people. They should forget their sectarian differences in face of the Zionists, the Americans and the Communists. This is the Islamic unity advocated by the Iranian leaders. It does not mean that we should hide our beliefs. it only implies that the sunnis and the Shi'as should not ridicule each other's beliefs and customs. But it does not mean that we should not propagate our ideas and ideals among the Sunnis in a sober and academic manner.

Q.62: SHI'A COLLECTIONS OF AHADITH

Do you have books of traditions like the Sunnis' Sihah Sitta?

A. If you mean books which we believe to contain only correct ahadith, as the Sunnis do about their Sihah Sitta (six correct books), or at least about Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, then the answer is 'NO'. We do not believe that any book written or compiled by a non-Ma'sum is completely free of errors.

But if you mean, important collections of the ahadith of the Prophet (s.a.w.a) and Ma'sumeen, then, yes, we have scores of such collections, most Important of which are the Four Early Books, and Three Later Books.

Four Early Books:

Compilation of the words of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and the Imams (a.s.) had started from the very beginning, though unfortunately the early writings are lost.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (a.s.) (57 A.H.-114 AH/676 C.E.-733 C.E.) and Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) (83 A.H.-148 A.H7702 C.E.-765 C.E.) the 5th and the 6th Imams, were able to spread their teachings far and wide. There were four thousand disciples gathered around the 6th Imam alone. Many disciples of these two and the succeeding Imams noted down whatever they heard from the Imams. Such collections were called usul (Roots; foundations). From those Usul, the Four Book's were compiled.

Four Books:

i. **Al-Kafi:**
By Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibnYa'qub al-Kulayni,(died in 329 A.H./941 C.E.). As. mentioned above, there were thousands of Usul in hand when the Shorter Occupation (Ghaybat Sughra) of the 12th Imam began in 260 A.H. There was no printing press in those days. The danger was imminent that those Usul would be

lost for ever, as anyone having one or more usul was reluctant to lend it to others. Also there was need to arrange those scattered ahadith subject-wise to facilitate their use. The Shi'a scholars asked al-Kulayni to fulfil this difficult task. Thus after twenty years of continuous effort, af-Kafi was compled.

ii. **Man la yahdhurhul-faqih**
by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Babwayh, popularly known as Shaykh Saduq. He was born after du'a of the 12th Imam in about 306 A.H.-919 C.E. and died in 381 a.H./991 C.E. His memory and his zeal in collecting ahadith were unmatched. He travelled far and wide in search of hadith. He has left a lot of collections of ahadith, but the above-mentioned book occupies a special place in Shi'a hadith and jurisprudence.

iii. **Tahdhibul Ahkam:**
By Abu Ja'fer Muhammad ibn al-Hasan at-Tusi. popularly known as Shaykh Tusi. (Born 385 AH/995 C.E. and died in 460/1067).

iv. **Al-Istibsar,**
by the same author. This too like Tahdhibul Ahkam is a critical study of ahadith.

Except al-Kafi, all three books are confined to the ahadith concerne with fiqh (jurisprudence). It was a strange coincidence tliat all the above muhadditheen (Traditionists) were named "Muhammad" and had the same patronymic “Abu Ja'far”.

The Shias, unlike the Sunnis, do not call any of the above books, “Sahih”. If a hadith is found in any of them, it does not necessarily mean that it is correct. Its acceptance or rejection depends on three tests: Conformity with the Qur'an and the known facts and reliability of its narrators. In the same way, if a hadith is found in some other book and passes the test, it will be accepted.

THE THREE LATER BOOKS:

In later period, 3 other books of ahadith became very popular. Unlike the former four books, these are not based on direct transmission; they are collections of ahadith gathered from various early books. These are:

i. **Bihar-ul-anwar:**
By Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (popularly known as 'Allamah Majlisi). (Born 1037/1628; died 1110/1699). He realised that hundreds of books which were known to exist a few centuries earlier, had become extinct. He feared that if the remaining books were not preserved they too would be lost. The four earlier books dealt mainly with fiqh; but there was a large number of ahadith on other subjects which was scattered throughout the Shi'a World. So he decided to collect those books and arrange their ahadith subject wise. He collected the whole treasure in twenty five volume-which now printed with typed letters has spread to one hundred and ten volumes.

'Allamah Majlis wrote in his Muqaddamah (Preface) that his immediate aim was to preserve those ahadith without looking at their degree of reliability; and If God gave him time he would later separate the authentic from unauthentic Unfortunately he died when only sixteen volumes were finalized. The remaining volumes were completed from the collected material by his trusted disciple and helper, Mirza 'Abdullah Afindl.

ii. **Al-Wafi,**
by Muhammad ibn Murtaza, commonly known as Muhsin Faiz (born 1010/1599; died 1091/1690). This book combines the ahadith (subject-wise) of the earlier Four Books, with comments and notes about each hadith fixing the degree of its

reliability.

iii. **Wasa'il-ushShi'a**:
By Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Hurr (born 1033/1625. died 1104/1693). This book collects all ahadith on jurisprudence from the early Four Books as well as other sources.

It will be noted that these three authors too had the same name, Muhammad. They are called "Three Later Muhammads", as the authors of the earlier Four Books are jointly called, "Three Earlier Muhammads."

It has been noted above that, unlike the early Four Books, these three books are not based on direct transmission. They are compiled from early books. Their importance however lies in the fact that they are of immense help to scholars who can get it in one place all relevant ahadith on a given subject, instead of hunting for them in scores of books.

Q.63: TEST OF AUTHENTICITY OF HADITH

Then how do you judge which tradition is trustworthy?

A. Only that hadith is considered authentic whose meaning is not against the Qur'an and another mutawatir hadith, nor against reason or known facts; and whose narrators are trustworthy.

Narrators' trustworthiness or otherwise is known from 'Itm-ur-rijal. There are many books of Shi'a scholars on this subject right from the Rijal of al-Kashshi (end of the 4th century of hijrah) to the present rhujtahid, as-Sayyid al-Khoui whose Mu'jam-u-rijal-il-hadith (in 23 large volumes) Is the most comprehensive of all. Depending on narrators' degree of trustworthiness, the Shi'a have divided ahadith into four categories: Sahih (Correct), Hasan (Good), Muwaththaq (Reliable) and Dha 'if (Weak).

Q. 64 ABOUT ABU HURAYRAH

A book prescribed for Isiamic studies In our country's secondary schools praises Abu Hurayrah that he was a constant companion oi the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and had a sharp memory which enabled him to remember and transmit thousands and thousands of prophetic traditions. I would like you to explain the reality to me.

A. Abu Hurayrah had accepted Islam at the end of the 7th year of hijrah—after the conquest of Khayber which was on the 24th or 25th of Rajab of 7A.H. The Prophet (s.a.w.a) died at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd month of 11 A.H. Thus the total period Abu Hurairah could be with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was about 3½ years. Such a man should not be called as one who was constantly with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

In such a short period, he claimed to hear so many ahadith from the Prophet (s.a.w.a) which exceed by far all the ahadith narrated in the Sunni books from the four Caliphs, Bibi Fatimah, all wives of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) (including 'A'ishah) and Imam Hassan and Imam Husayn.

Traditionists have found that there are 5,374 traditions narrated by Abu Hurayrah. Now look at the ahadith of some of the above-mentioned personalities recorded in Sunni books:

Abu Bakar	142	ahadith
'Umar	537	"
'Uthman	146	"

'Ali	586	"
	1,411	

These four Caliphs had jointly spent a total of about 86 years with the Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Now compare 1,411 ahadith In 86 years with 5,374 ahadith In 3½ years!!

People In early days of Islam knew that Abu Hurayrah was an inveterate liar. 'Ali (a.s.) called him, "the greatest liar"; 'Umar flogged him and forbade, him transmission of hadith. It was during Mo'awiyah's reign that Abu Hurayrah's "wonderful memory" came to the fore. Mo'awiyah established a department of propaganda in which alfew companions like Abu Hurayrah and some of the companions' disciples, like 'Urwah Ibn az-Zubayr, were employed. They flooded the Islamic world with their "traditions" belittling the family members of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and extolling their enemies. In the process the holy name of the Prophet was besmeared too. It is such "traditions" which serve as the armoury for the enemies of Islam.

Q. 65: ON INTEREST

Can an individual take Riba in case of necessity? Or should he be firm and steadfast and abstain from the Riba?

A. Any deal entailing riba is invalid. Details may be seen In the English translation of the Rulings of Ayatullah al-'Uzma al-Khoul; you may obtain a copy from the Islamic Seminary.

But in case of emergency you make take loan from a bank without intention of paying its interest. Later on when the bank demands extra payment (as interest) and there Is no way of avoiding It, then you may pay It "to save your honour".

Q. 66: INTEREST FROM THE NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE, TANZANIA

I have deposited some money in the National Bank of Commerce. Now may I take its' interest or not?

A. There is no harm in taking Interest from the National Bank of Commerce, Tanzania.

Q67: WIFE WENT BACK TO CHRISTIANITY

(Many problems arose when the wife of a new Shi'a convert went back to Christianity. The questions may be understood from the answers copied here).

A. First of all, I must humbly express my gratitude to Allah Sub-hanahu wa Ta'ala that he made our books instrumental for your guidance.I welcome you whole-heartedly and most sincerely in the fold of the true and original Islam. May Allah keep you steadfast on the right patrh and guide others through you. Amen. Also I congratulate you on your faithful obedience of the rules of Shari'ah It was really very good of you to remove the musical Instruments from your house.

Regarding your problems, please note the following points:

1. It is clear from the facts mentioned by you that your wife was not a Muslim. She had pretended to accept Islam just to please you; but in reality she believed in Christianity and longed to return to the Church environment.
2. As soon as she returned to her previous Christian belief, your marriage with her became null and void, and three months later the dissolution of marriage was final.

However, as you cannot pinpoint the time when she had left Islam (if she had ever accepted it!), I advise you to divorce her at once. It will save you many troubles and you will be able to claim the custody of your various properties. (Better consult a good lawyer on legal points of this advice).

3. According to the Shi'a shariah, mother is entitled to the custody of her child till he reaches the age of seven years;thereafter the father gets the custody. But if any parent (father or mother) renounces Islam and becomes Kafir, his/her right is forfeited. Therefore, your Christian wife has lost the right of custody because of her Kufr, and now you are the rightful guardian of your legitimate children. (This ruling is according to the Muslim Shari'ah. As for the law of the country, you should consult a good lawyer).

Q.68: RIGHT OF A KAFIR MOTHER

You already know the dispute with my ex-Wife whom I divorced for going back to Christianity. Is she entitled to the rights of a parent from my children?

A. Read again the relevant chapter of my book, “Family Life of Islam”, and you will find that she Is not to be obeyed in matters of religion and Shari'ah; but even then the children should show her respect in other matters. However, she has no right at all concerning their custody and bringing up.

Q. 69: RIGHTS OF A MUSLIM SISTER MARRIE6 TO A CHRISTIAN

I have my sister who, despite being a Muslim, married a Christian:

(a) Has she any "rights of Relatives" from me?

(b) If I succeed to bring her back to Islam, will it be necessary for her to recite Shahadah as a new convert to Islam?

(c) If she comes back to Islam, will all her children become Moslem automatically? Must they also recite Shahadah? Should she leave them with their Christian father?

A.

(a) Yes; you should show her brotherly love in worldly affairs, but not in religious matters.

(b) No She is a Muslim, although at present she is entangled in the capital sin of illegal sexual relations with a Kafir, whom she erroneously thinks is her husband. But if she repents and returns within the boundary of shari'ah, there is no need to recite Shahadah again.

(c) If she returns to you, the minor children will be treated as Muslims, but they will have to recite Shahadah when they reach age of bulugh.

Q. 70: CAN A KAFIR INHERIT A MUSLIM?

If my sister and my half brother remained as they are now, without becoming Muslems, will they have the right of inheritance on me if I die?

I have my half brother (by my mother) who is a Christian Has he any right on me as my relative?

A .Kafir does not inherit a Muslim. Moreover, brother or sister is not entitled to inheritance if the deceased has left father, and/or mother, and/or a son and/or a daughter.

Q. 71: DIVISION OF A DECEASED WOMAN'S ASSETS

How should the gold ornaments left by a woman be destributed between the surviving husband, mother and father respectively.

Your guidance, based on Shi'a Ithna'asheri Law of inheritance, is kindly solicited.

A. If the deceased has not left any child of her own, and there are no agnate or consanguine brothers, then the estate will be divided as follows:

Husband - one-half

Mother—one-third

Father- one-sixth.

For your information, you may find this division In the verses 11 and 12 of the chapter 4 (The Women) of the Qur'an; and also in the ruling No. 1733 of Ayatullah al-Khoul (vide Minhajus-saleheen, vol.

Q. 72: DIVISION OF AN ESTATE

My wife died and she has left Shs. 36,000/= cash; and she has left the following:

(1) Father, (2) Husband, (3) 2 sisters, (4) 4 daughters and (5) 3 sons.

I shall be grateful if you will guide me as to how to distribute the amount according to Shi'a law.

A. I was sorry to learn about the death of your wife. May Allah give her high place near 14 Ma'sumeen (a.s.).

As for the division of the money left by her, it is as follows:

Husband will get one-fourth; father one-sixth; and the balance will be divided among the sons and daughters - a son getting twice as much as a daughter. Sisters will get nothing.

She has left Shs. 36,000/-. Therefore, the final figures will be as follows:

Husband	Shs. 9,000/=
Father	Shs. 6,000/=
2 sons each 4,200/=	Shs. 12,600/=
4 daughters each 2,100/=	Shs. 8,400/=
Total	Shs. 36,000/=

Q. 73: MEMBERSHIP OF A SUNNI-RUN INSTITUTION

Is it right for a Shi'a to be a member of a Jamaat under Sunni leadership?

A. Yes, if the aims and objects of that association are common and not sectarian.

Q.74: ABANDONED GOLF BALLS AND TEES

When we go and play golf, we often pick up tees (a peg used in golf to raise the ball while hitting) which have been lost by other players. We too sometimes lose our tees and expect other people to find and use them. Does this mean that the tees we pick up are'ghasbi'?

On the golf course the caddies (people who carry your cart during the game), ask us to buy their balls which they have found lost by other people. Can we buy these? Please take

into account that we lose our balls quite often and also that the caddies put a lot of effort in looking for these balls before selling them.

A. It depends on the value of the said tee or ball. If its price is less than that of 2 grammes of pure silver then the finder may become its owner and treat it as his property. Then if the original owner comes to claim it, he is entitled to it provided the thing is extant but if it is used up or lost again, then there is no responsibility on the finder.

If the price is equal to, or more than that of two grammes of pure silver, and it is difficult to ascertain who the original owner is, then the finder may treat it as his property, but he will be responsible to pay its price to the original owner, if he is found. If it is definitely known that the original owner has abandoned it then the finder may treat it as his own property, and the original owner has no right to claim it or its price.

Q. 75: SHAVING HAIR ON HANDS AND FEET

Is it Sunnat or recommended to shave or trim the hair growing on the hands or feet of a male person? Why?

A. No. it is not sunnat.

Q. 76: ABOUT BARNABAS AND HIS GOSPEL

I received a copy of the gospel of Barnabas, published by M/s BEGUM AISHA BAWANY WAKF. KARACHI, PAKISTAN. The publisher in his front page presentation has written; "About Barnabas the commandment is 'if he comes onto you receive him'. The publisher refers to the Epistle to the Colossians, Ch. 4 Verse 10.

A Christian friend has told me that the Gospel of Barnabas is rejected by the Christian world because Barnabas was not inspired by God. I challenged him to the above reference.

The first Bible we got, read:- "Aristarchus who is in prison with me sends his greetings and so does Mark the cousin of Barnabas. (You have already received instructions to welcome Mark if he comes your way)."

I was shocked and embarrassed. I forced my friend to bring a different edition and there was no difference in the text with the brackets maintained.

A. Bilal Trust of Pakistan has sent your letter to me for reply. You have written that the publishers of the "Gospel of Barnabas" have written 'in their first page presentation: "About Barnabas the commandment is 'if he comes unto you receive him" The publishers have referred to the Epistle to the Colossians, chapter 4 verse 10. Also that a Christian showed you a Bible which says "(you have already received instruction to welcome Mark if he comes your way)".

I checked the quotation given by the publishers of the said "Gospel" in the King James version of the Bible which is the oldest and even now the best English translation of the Bible. It says:*" ... and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas (touching whom you received commandments: if he comes unto you, receive him)."*

It appears that the Pakistan publishers have related the pronoun "whom" to Barnabas, while the writers of the Bible (which was shown to you) have substituted the pronoun with the noun "Mark." Thus the argument can never be brought to its end. They should not have replaced the pronoun with the name. However, I would advise you not to put too much reliance on the said “Gospel”,as its authenticity is open to question.Its manuscript in Italian language was found in the imperial library of Vienna (Austria). Lonslade Ragg and

Laure Ragg edited and translated it into English, which was published by the Clarendon press,Oxford in 1907.The translators had written a preface, in which they had tried to show that the manuscript was spurious, not genuine. The muslim publishers (of South Africa and Pakistan) have omitted that preface entirely which they should have not done.The best course would have been to print the preface and then reply to its arguments.

There are many books which give an authentic picture of Christianity. By a copy of this letter, I request M/S Bilal Trust of Pakistan to send you a copy of "Dimensions of Christianity", which was published by "Islami Mission, Sant Nager, Lahore." It may prove useful to you.

Q.77: IS MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE ESENTIAL FOR VALIDITY OF A MARRIAGE?

A. No, in Islam the spoken words of a person are more important. If a man and a woman or their authorised agents recite the formula of Nikah, marriage takes place without any need of a written certificate. It is, of course, advisable to get a certificate from the reciter of Nikah, to avoid possible difficulties in future.

Q. 78: MARRIAGE WITH UNCLE'S DAUGHTER

If I marry the sister of A, can my son marry the daughter of A?

A. Yes.

Q. 79: IS VASECTOMY ALLOWED?

In your book "YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED" volume I, page 49, question number 105, on recognition of family planning by Islam, the answer is not detailed except that abortion is prohibited.

Perhaps you might be aware of a less-used method of family planning by males known medically as "Vasectomy". In it a man's "vas deferens" is cut and tied up with a simple operation, to prevent sperms to be included in ejaculation during sexual union. This operation does not interfere with normal sexual pleasure. Is this method of family planning allowed in Islam?

A. No. Vasectomy is not allowed.

Q.80: REDRESS FOR A WOMAN NEGLECTED BY HER HUSBAND

Why can't a woman divorce a man? Under extremely difficult circumstances when the man has left his wife refusing to give her 'talaaq', how should she be able to marry another man?

A. In the condition mentioned in the question, the woman may refer her case to the Mujtahid (or his authorised agents) who would direct the husband to maintain her and treat her according to Islamic shari'ah. If the husband persists in his misbehaviour, the Mujtahid (or his agent) would give her talaq by his own authority.

Why the woman has not been given the authority to give talaq to her husband? For its reason, read my booklet "Family Life of Islam" (pp. 44-52 and 63-67).

Q. 81: BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES AND RULE OF 'IDDAH

If I enter in mut'ah and use Birth Control, is she required to observe 'idda after the expiry of the period of mut'ah or not?

A. Yes. 'Iddah is compulsory, if sexual relation has been established even once. There is no escape from it.

Q.82: CAN A WOMAN IN 'IDDAH GO FOR SHOPPING?

During 'Idda, is a woman allowed to go out for shopping if she has no servant? Should she remain in the house all day?

A. She may go out during 'Iddah, if need be, observing proper hijab.

Q. 83: CAN A MUSLIM WOMAN MARRY A NON-MUSLIM?

A Shi'a adult girl wants to marry a Christian man. The man is not prepared to accept Islam. Can we arrange their marriage in our Imambara? If refused, they threaten to go to church for the marriage?

A. Marriage of a Muslim woman with a non-Muslim man is not allowed in Islamic Shari'ah. It is strictly forbidden in the Qur'an,and no Islamic sect has ever allowed it. There is no difference on this matter between Shi'a and Sunni sects.

Therefore the said “marriage” wIll not be a marriage. It makes no difference whether any ceremony is performed or not, and If it is performed then it is done In church or masjid, it will be totally null and void; if the man and woman remain together they will be living in sin; and the children of such union will be illegitimate.

Q.84: ABOUT MUT'AH

1. *How many times a man can contract a woman in mut'ah? I mean to stay, with same woman. Suppose I contract mut'ah for 7 days and then after, say, one month I want to contract again with the same women. How many time in this way I can contract, mut'ah?*
2. *If I contract mut'ah with a woman for 7 days and after 7 days she wants to contract mut'ah with another man, is she required to observe 'Idda or not?*

A. A woman married in Mut'ah has to observe 'Iddah which in her case is two monthly courses, or two months. If in that period, signs of pregnancy appear, then the 'Iddah will continue upto the delivery of the child.

But if the same man who had done mut'ah with her wants to extend the mut'ah period, or wants to remarry her, there Is no need of 'Iddah.

Q85.The rule of 3 divorces and mutah marriage

If a married woman is divorced three times, the ex-husband cannot marry her again until she is married to another man and divorced. Now if I enter in mut'ah for, say, 7 days, after 7 days she is no longer my wife; now after, say, 15 days I again enter in mut'ah with same woman for, say, 10 days and after 10 days she again will remain no longer my wife. Say, after one month I again enter in mut'ah with her for one month and after one month she Is no longer my wife. Thus I have entered in mut'ah with the same woman for three times

now. If I intend to enter in mut'ah with same woman again, is it permitted for the 4th time, or 5th time or 6th time?

A. In mut'ah marriage, there is no "divorce", because the marriage terminates by itself on expiry of the agreed period, while in permanent marriage divorce is required to terminate the marriage.

It should be now clear to you that the rule about "3 divorces" is not applicable to mut'ah marriage, for the simple reason that there is no divorce here. Therefore, one may marry the same woman as many times as they agree.

Q. 86: SOME CEREMONIES AT MARRIAGE TIME

During our marriage ceremonies, one notices that the customs we practise are very unIslamic. According to 'shari'ah' are we allowed to sprinkle flowers on the bride and groom, to break earthen pots beneath their feet, and cut wedding cakes? In the above, please note, that we aren't mixing men and women nor are we playing music etc... but are just following the customs and traditions of our grand-parents which make the wedding lively and more enjoyable. If we can't do the above, please, what should we do apart from the 'nikah' ceremony to make a marriage a more lively occasion.

A. There is no harm in showering flowers on the bride and bridegroom. Cutting wedding cakes is western culture and breaking earthen pots a Hindu rite; both these rites should be avoided.

Q87: IS VANNEY ALLOWED?

A vanney is a ceremony in which the mother of the bride covers herself and the daughter with velvet cloth; and the relatives, in turn, come, to her, kiss her, give her a sweet or 'attar", sprinkle confetti on her and give her some money. Is this allowed?

A. There is no harm if it involves only those male relatives wno are "mahram", or if it is done by ladies only.

Q. 88: PURDAH DURING MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

By your answer, does it mean that after nikah, the bride and groom on reaching home are allowed to be met by ONLY their parents (the other relations being either na-mahram of the groom, bride, or each other)? In Arabia during the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) 's times, how did weddings take place? Weren't they full of music etc.?

A. You should not confuse the matter by using the word " music" for the chant or songs sung by women during wedding in those days.

So far as shari'ah is concerned the rule of "purdah" is not relaxed for marriage ceremonies, although nowadays only few "old-fashioned" women seem to care about it in marriage gatherings. To compound the evil, now video films are made of the whole ceremonies, and shown everywhere thus a wrong committed for a few hours in perpetuated for years.

Q. 89: HIJAB RULES AND LOOKING AT A WOMAN OR MAN

Are we allowed to look at women who are veiled with their faces open? Are women allowed to look at men if they are themselves properly veiled? Or if they aren't properly veiled?

Do men have any necessary covering like women have to wear hijab? Can a man look at an unveiled Muslim or non-Muslim without a 'lusty1 intention? Does 'lusty" include:

(a) admiring her facial features?

(b) admiring her clothes?

(c) admiring the contours of her body?

(d) admiring her parts which are left bare eg. legs, hands, etc.

If I am mahram to a lady, am I allowed to look at her private parts? To what extent is she allowed to show me her body?

A. Here is the gist of the full mas'ala, which covers all your enquiries on this subject:

Woman is obligated to cover her body (except face and two palms) from all men except the husband and those who are in prohibited degree like father, son etc. It is wajib for her to cover even her face and palms from all—other than husband—even from mahram if he looks at her with lust; rather it is ahwat to hide the face and palms from ghair-mahrams in all cases.

Man is not obligated to hide his body except the private parts. But it is haram for woman to look at his body-except the face, head, neck, hands and feet She may look at the above-mentioned parts (face etc.) if there is no lustful intention or enjoyment, although it is ahwat not to look at these parts In any case.

Man may look mahram women, provided there is no lust or enjoyment. He is not allowed to look at Ghair-mahrams even without lusty intention; it is ahwat not to look even at Ghair-mahram woman's face and palms.

Q. 90: LOOKING AT WOMEN NOT OBSERVING HIJAB

On reading "Your Questions Answered'. I came to a part in which you have stated that a Muslim could watch a film provided:

(a) it had no music

(b) It was not immoral and

(c) it didn't have dancing in it.

What about the namahram women we see in it who are unveiled?

A. The face of those ghair-mahram women may be looked at who do not observe rules of hijab—provided that look is not with lust.

Q. 91: HIJAB BEFORE MALE SERVANTS

Why is it necessary for a woman to wear hijab in front of her male slave? Does he not have the similar instincts and feelings of a human being that he should be allowed on the beauty of his mistress? Does a women have to wear hijab in front of her servants?

A. Women are not allowed to remove hijab in front of those male servants who might be having even a little bit of lust. Qur'an clearly says *“they are not obligated to observe hijab before only those male servants who have no need of women”* (see Sura an-Nur,ayat 31).

Q. 92: ABOUT MUSIC

We have a few tapes that our brothers got from Iran. The tapes are full with chants supported by drums, which is definitely a musical instrument and also I heard other supportive instruments?" (The above question was asked from a Caribbean country. Another brother asked from another country):
I have seen a programme on Iran in which there is a scene which shows the Iranians acting out the tragedy of Kerbala during Moharram/Safar. During the show, music is constantly being played. Is this allowed in the Islamic shari'ah

A. The law about music, according to Ayatullah al-Khoui, is as follows:-

Music is haram... doing it as well as listening to it or earning by it. It does not mean merely good voice, but it is prolongation of voice with variation of tune and crescendo in a particular charming way (as is found in the gatherings of lahv and pleasure parties) and the musical instruments. It makes no difference even if the words sung are haqq (right, true) like recital of the Qur'an, du'a, Marthiyah etc.; rather his punishment will be increased if he uses music in things (like Qur'an etc.) which are intended for obedience of Allah Ta'ala.

Of course, some ('ulama) have made exception of singing of singer women in marriages, and this (exception) is not far (from truth), but Ihtiyat should not be abandoned and it should be restricted to the (occasion of) sending the bride (to her bridegroom) and to the gathering related to it before or after that sending off. Rather it is ahwat to avoid it in all cases.

Ayatullah al-Khoui has further explained that only that music is unlawful which has affinity i.e. relation and connection with "lahw" and "la'ib" i.e. vain amusement and merry-making.

While on this subject, I should mention two more exceptions to this general rule:

1. Hudi, a song sung by camel-drivers, the effect of which was to increase the camel's speed.
2. Military band, used for soldiers' march while training or fighting etc.

But as hudi was restricted to that particular occasion, likewise military band is restricted to the soldiers who are actually fighting or training or are marching with it. Other people are not allowed to listen to it.

You should never forget that actions of ghair-ma'sumeen are not the criterion of religion.

We must appreciate that the Islamic government of Iran is trying to establish Islamic system in various fields of life: economy, spcial ordr, government departments etc. But we cannot expect them to attain to their goal at once. We should not expect them to undo the misdeeds of taqhuti regime in 4 or 5 years. Do not forget that two or three generations of Iranis had been brought up in un-islamic ways. Can all of them become truly pious overnight? The Islamic government has started on the right path and is going in the right direction. Let us hope and pray that they succeed in their endeavours.

Q. 93: WHY 'MUSIC IS NOT FORBIDDEN BY NAME IN THE QUR'AN?

Why isn't it straightforward in the Qur'an about the evil of music but is indirectly put? How come there is not straight forward ayat which clarifies that 'Ali ibn Abi Taalib is the successor of the Prophet and that 12 Imams will follow him right to the end until Al-Mahdi (a.s.).

A. Here is a hadith from Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (a.s.) which fully answers your question:

Once the Imam (a.s.) said that the verse, *"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those vested with authority from among you"* (4:59), was revealed about 'Ali ibn Abu Talib, al-Hassan and al-Husayn (a.s.). Hearing this, someone said: "People say, 'Why did Allah not mention the names of 'Ali and his family in His Book?'"

The Imam answered: "Tell them that there came the command of Salaat (prayer), but Allah did not mention whether three or four rak'at (units) (to be performed); it was the Apostle of Allah who explained all the details. And (the command of) Zakat was revealed, but Allah did not say that it is one in every forty dirham; it was the Apostle of Allah who explained it; and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) was ordered but Allah did not say to perform Tawaf (circumambulation of the Ka'bah) seven times—the Apostle of Allah explained it. Likewise the verse was revealed: *"Obey Allah,, and obey the Apostle and those vested with authority from among you,"* and it; was revealed about 'Ali and Hassan and Hussain (a.s.)."

As for music, the words "lahw" and "zur" are comprehensive and they cover several forbidden things including music. You should not take the Qur'anic words in the meanings they are used for in Gujarati and Urdu, or even in modern Arabic. They have to be taken in the meanings they were used for 1400 years earlier.

Q. 94: WOMEN SINGING AT MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

You explained your answer quite clearly. However I would like to know whether the following is what you mean to say: "Having a woman sing at a marriage with music, in front of men, is allowed according to the laws of the Shari'ah?

A. No. Her voice should not reach "namahram"; and not with musical instruments; also the song should not be obscene.

Q. 95: MUSIC IN MARTHIYA

It is widely accepted that instrumental music is haram. Is It also haram to sing an English pop song, to hum the tune of a 'marsiya', to listen to a namahram's voice reciting a munajaat/majlis or song (in a film for example), to listen to a bird singing, to listen to war music and also to listen to the rythm of a hammer blended in with the monotonous sawing of wood at a construction site, for example?

A. Vocal music too is prohibited. It means “the sound which is prolonged with variation of tune and crescendo, as is recognised as music by irreligious people.” In other words, music is that sound which irreligious people accept as music.

It makes no difference whether it is in marthiyah or Qur'an. (In fact reciting Qur'an or marthiyah/nawha with music Is double haram). Bird's chirping is not called "singing"; and reciting anything in good melodious voice (without crossing the limit mentioned above) is lawful and good. Hearing ghair-mahram's voice is not prohibited, provided it does not create any "mischief', or is not accompanied by lust.

Q. 96: WATCHING TV PROGRAMMES

Concerning TV., what do you recommend that we watch only the news, documentary shows and positive movies? Or totally abstain?

A. There is no need of totally abstaining from T.V. You may watch news, documentary and educational films and the programmes having positive values-provided it is not polluted with obscene scenes or language.

Q. 97: SONG FOR ISLAMIC PROPAGATION

Can one listen to a song that has a clear message, and it opposes wrong in the society, which is technically a da'wah through music? Is the law rigid and firm? Or is there some flexibility for music that has a message?

A. I think the reply should be clear from the explanations given above.

The booklet, "Music and Its Effects", is a good writing by our late Chairman, Haji Ahmad Hussein Sheriff. Yet I would like to add a chapter on the above-mentioned exceptions with some details

Q. 98: WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT ISLAM

I want to know more about Islam. Where can I get such knowledge?

A. You may contact the Bilal Muslim Mission for Books.You may also enroll yourself in one of our Correspondence Courses. There are courses for higher and junior grades.The junior courses are available in English and Swahili languages. The English one is called Islamic Religious Course (IRC, in short), and the Swahili one is named Masomo Ya Ki-Islamu Kwa Njia ya Posta (MYK, in short).

The higher grade course is called "Islamic Correspondence Course" (ICC, in short). It is available in English only.

Q. 99: BOOKS WRITTEN BY YOU

How many books have you written to date? Will you be kind enough to write for me a subject-wise list?

A. I suppose you need only the list of my English books. Urdu and Arabic writings would not be of any interest to you. With each book, I am writing brief details of its publication and also its translations. The main publishers' names have been abridged as follows:

BMT = Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam

BMK = Bilal Muslim Mission of Kenya, Mombasa

WOFIS = World Organisation For Islamic Services,Tehran

VIEF = Vancouver Islamic Education Foundation,Canada

PET = Peermohamed Ebrahim Trust, Karachi

A) Tafsir of the Holy Qur'an

1-8) Tafsir al-Mizan, Vol. 1 to 8. Translation, from Arabic, of the Tafsir al-Mizan of Late 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn at-Tabataba'i. Seven volumes have been published; 8th is under print. (WOFIS).

9) Tafsir al-Bayan, Translation, from Arabic, of the Tafsir of the same name of Ayatullah' Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khoui. (Not complete yet)

B) Fundamentals of Faith

10. Qur'an and Hadith: Repeatedly published by BMT and BMK.

11. Islam: At least 17 editions have been published by BMT, BMK, WOFIS and a

Manchester (U.K.) Association.
Its Swahili translation has been published several times by BMT and BMK. WOFIS has prepared and published its translations in Japanese, Thai, Italian and Hausa. They also have translations ready in French, Burmese and Indonesian.

12. Need of Religion: Published repeatedly by BMT and BMK. Its Swahili translation, Haja ya Dini, has been published several times by them.
13. God of Islam: Published at least 15 times by BMT, BMK and WOFIS. Its Swahili translation published several times by BMT and BMK. Translations in French and Thai prepared by WOFIS. Urdu, Hindi and Gujarat] translations published as serials by the Al-Waiz, Lucknow, and the Tawheed (Hindi ed.) Lucknow.
14. Justice of God: More than four editions by BMT and BMK. Its revised edition is ready for printing by BMT and the Muslim Foundation, New Jersey, U.S.A. Swahili translation printed by BMT.
15. Prophethood: Several editions printed by BMT and BMK. Swahili translation also published by BMT.
16. Imamate: At least nine editions published by BMT, BMK and WOFIS. Its revised, enlarged and annotated edition published by WOFIS in 1987, and reprinted by BMT.
Its Urdu translation has been published by Tablighat-e-Imani (Bombay) on the occasion of the celebration of the 14th century of al-Ghadeer. SwahL'i, translation under preparation by BMT.
17. Day of Judgement: Three editions published by BMT and BMK. Urdu translation is being checked.
18. What A Muslim Should Know And Believe: First edition published in 1988 by BMT. Swahili translation published by BMT in 1989.

C) Fiqh

19. Elements of Islamic Studies: More than eight editions published by BMT, BMK, London and the Muslim Foundation (U. S.A.).
Its Swahil! translation published several times by BMT. Swedish translation published by VIEF, and Sindhi one published by Ma'arif-e-Islam Foundation, Karachi, both in 1990. Reportedly its Portuguese translation is almost ready.
20. Fast: Published several times by BMT.
21. Islamic Laws: Contains detailed laws of marriage, dissolution of marriage, will, inheritance, acknowledgement and waqf. (Now out of stock).
22. Pork: Published more than ten times by BMT, WOFIS, BMK and Pakistan, WOFIS has distributed it throughout the world.They have also published its French and It Jmesian translations. French version also printed by some Muslims in Paris,Persian translation prepared and published by Mr. Muham-madi Reyshahri, Tehran. Swahili translation published repeatedly by BMT.
23. Hijab: It has not been published yet. Its Swahili translation printed several times by BMT
24. Rulings On Modern Poblems: It is translation of المسائل المستحدثه of Ayatullah al-Khoui.Printed as a serial in 1978 ih the Light Magazine, Dsm.

D) Moral and Social Affairs

25. Inner Voice: Two editions published by PET; third revised edition published by M/s Dar Rah-e-Haq, Qum; fourth published by BMT.
26. The Charter of Rights: Translation of Imam Zaynul 'Abideen (a.s.)'s "Risalatul-Huquq"; first published by PET, with the title "Reciprocal Rights". Second revised edition, with footnotes and Preface, published by VIEF in 1989. Its Swahili translation published by BMT.
27. Family Life of Islam: Published several times by BMT, BMK and WOFIS. PET included the whole book in a publication on family affairs. Its Gujarati translation was published as a serial in the Alamdar, Bombay. Urdu translation under preparation.

E) History and Biographies

28. The Holy Prophet: At least four editions have been published by BMT, BMK and the Islamic Society of Virginea (U.S.A.). Its Swahili translation published several times by BMT and BMK.
29. The Shi'as and the Shi'ism: An in-depth study of the Shi'a faith and the Shi'ite peoples, from religious and historical perspectives. Under preparation.

F) Islamics

30. Muhammad Is the Last Prophet: At least six editions have been published by BMT, BMK and WOFIS.Its Swahili translation has been repeatedly published by BMT and BMK.
31. Slavery: From Islamic & Christian Perspective: First published by PET; second enlarged and annotated edition published by VIEF, Canada.
32. A Correspondence Between a Christian and a Muslim. Translation of a Persian booklet; published by WOFIS.
33. Sects of Islam;A short booklet, published by WOFIS several times.
34. Shi’ite Sects: Another small booklet, published by WOFIS.Its translation published by BMT.

G) Miscellaneous

35. - 39) Your Question Answered, volume 1 to 5; Four Volumes printed by BMT; the 5th volume (i.e. this book) is now ready for print.
40. A few Questions Answered: A small booklet printed twice by BMK (Nairobi branch)
41. Four California lectures; Type-set by VIEF and published by BMT
42. -43)Selected Articles Vols. 1 and 2; This collection of articles is under preparation.